



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)

REMOTE MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024, 7:00 PM

MRPC MEETING MATERIALS:
[January 4, 2024 Meeting Material](#)

DETAILED AGENDA

7:00 PM

1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

This meeting is being held under Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, signed by Governor Healey on March 29, 2023, allowing local and regional governments to hold public meetings remotely or in a hybrid fashion. All votes will be taken by roll call.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Reid – present
D. Valliere - present
G. Tillotson – present
G. Corbosiero – present
K. Norton – present
K. Newman – present
K. Nartowicz – present
L. Shifrin - present
M. Bohart – present
R. Ward - present
S. Donahue – present
A. Arpano – present
K. Munroe - present

7:05 PM

2. MRPC Minutes – December 7, 2023 – Approval of Commissioners Requested

Chairperson L. Shifrin asked for the minutes to be updated to reflect the presence of Mr. R. Swartz at the December meeting. G. Tillotson moved to accept the minutes as presented with the addition of adding Mr. Swartz as attending the meeting. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Arpano – abstain
A. Reid – yes

D. Valliere - yes
G. Tillotson – yes
G. Corbosiero – yes
K. Norton – yes
K. Newman – yes
K. Munroe - yes
K. Nartowicz – yes
L. Shifrin – yes
M. Bohart – yes
S. Donahue – yes

After the meeting, H. Ford and G. Eaton confirmed that Mr. Swartz was listed as being present. A change was not necessary.

7:10 PM

3. Cash Schedule – December 2023 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested

L. Quinlivan presented the December 2023 cash schedule. The opening balance for September 1, 2023 was \$553,627.02, total receipts and transfers for the month were \$138,989.41, total cash on hand before this warrant was \$692,616.43, less the amount of this warrant \$146,192.80, left a balance after the warrant of \$546,423.63.

Having no objections, G. Corbosiero moved to accept the December 2023 cash schedule as presented subject to audit. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Arpano – yes
A. Reid – yes
D. Valliere - yes
G. Tillotson – yes
G. Corbosiero – yes
K. Norton – yes
K. Newman – yes
K. Munroe - yes
K. Nartowicz – yes
L. Shifrin – yes
M. Bohart – yes
S. Donahue – yes

7:15 PM

4. Guest Announcements and Questions

No guest announcements or questions presented

7:20 PM

5. Administrative Matters

MRPC had a retirement lunch for Brad Harris, the Transportation Projects Director who will be retiring on January 5, 2023. As per our advertising policies, we did post the position internally and had one person apply for the position. We would like to recommend the hiring of Mr. Brian Doherty for the

position of the new Transportation Projects Director.

5.1 Hiring of Transportation Projects Director – Action Requested

REPORT

As previously reported, Mr. Brad Harris has resigned his position of Transportation Projects Director and will retire from the MRPC after being with this organization for 38 years.

In accordance with the *MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook*, Section B. POLICIES APPLICABLE TO ALL MRPC REPRESENTATIVES, subsection 8. JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS, Management internally posted the availability of this position on December 11, 2023 with applications being due no later than Noon, December 27th. One application was received from an internal candidate.

An Interview Panel was formed at the December 7, 2023 meeting of the Commissioners. Those serving included:

1. Mary Jo Bohart, Commissioner, City of Fitchburg
2. Kristofer Munroe, Commissioner and Vice Treasurer, Town of Hubbardston
3. Robert (“Bob”) Schwartz, Commissioner and Treasurer, City of Gardner
4. Sheri Bean, Senior Planner, Transportation Department
5. Karen Chapman, Planning and Development Director
6. Holly Ford, Administrative and Human Resource Director
7. Glenn Eaton, Executive Director

The Panel interviewed Mr. Brian Doherty, Senior Planner, Transportation Department on Friday, December 29th.

The Panelists discussed Mr. Doherty’s merits and unanimously voted to recommend the hiring of Mr. Doherty as the MRPC’s new Transportation Projects Director.

The Executive Director recommends that Mr. Doherty be hired in accordance with the following conditions:

1. His starting salary will be \$105,000, commencing January 8, 2024 through June 30, 2024;
 - a. He will attend no less than three intensive training sessions in 2024 (calendar year). The courses would be, or related to, Communication Skills, Supervision and Leadership Development, Professional Development, Teams Building, and others as relevant, as chosen by the Executive Director. Courses would be sourced from Employers Association of the North East, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), and/or others.
 - b. Based upon the successful completion of these courses coupled with

- an excellent performance evaluation, he will then receive a salary increase to \$110,250 on July 1, 2024 for FY25 (this will be his total annual salary increase); and,
2. Assuming his starting salary is \$110,250 on July 1, 2024 for FY25;
 - a. He will attend no less than three intensive training sessions in 2025 (calendar year). The courses would be, or related to, Communication Skills, Supervision and Leadership Development, Professional Development, Teams Building, and others as relevant, as chosen by the Executive Director. Courses would be sourced from Employers Association of the North East (EANE), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), and/or others.
 - b. Based upon the successful completion of these courses, coupled with an excellent performance evaluation, he will then receive a salary increase to 115,762.50 on July 1, 2025 for FY26 (this will be his total annual salary increase).
 - 1) Salary increases in FY27 and beyond will be at the discretion of the Executive Director and Commissioners in compliance with *MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook*, Section C. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, Subsection 14. EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY REVIEW and the most recent salary survey (as updated by the Management) and equivalent to all other employees (i.e. annual merit-based percent increases).

The Commissioners and Executive Director reserves the right not to award additional compensation, as stated above, if the new Transportation Projects Director does not fulfill the above conditions (in accordance with the *MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook*, section C. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS, subsection 14. EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY REVIEW, as amended).

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the recommendations of the Interview Panel to promote Mr. Doherty to the position of Transportation Projects and at the salary level commencing on January 8, 2024 through FY26 as recommended by the Executive Director detailed in the above **REPORT**.

G. Corbosiero moved to accept the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

- A. Arpano – yes
- A. Reid – yes
- D. Valliere - yes
- G. Tillotson – yes
- G. Corbosiero – yes
- K. Norton – yes
- K. Newman – yes

K. Munroe - yes
K. Nartowicz – yes
L. Shifrin – yes
M. Bohart – yes
S. Donahue – yes

Mr. Doherty took a moment to introduce himself and to thank the Commissioners for the opportunity to serve as the new Transportation Projects Director.

5.2 Regionalization of Services Discussion – Information

Recently, several communities have reached out to MRPC and raised the question of whether our organization could provide certain municipal services on a regional basis, such as building inspection, land use planning, and weights and measures official. As we understand the matter, some of our municipalities are having some difficulty finding people to fill local positions. MRPC will reach out to all municipalities to determine the extent of the problem possibly by surveying our communities, this month.

At this evening's meeting, staff would like to learn from our Commissioners if they are aware of similar issues in their respective communities/ We also ask you to research this matter in your respective cities and towns, through January, and inform all of us of their findings **at our next meeting to be held on February 8th**.

If one or more municipalities wish to engage the MRPC for the delivery of local services, then the Management will research and present several options for consideration by the Commissioners. MRPC could enter into interlocal agreements (contracts) on a community-by-community basis, or with a consortium of municipalities, or create a council of governments (COG) and provide certain services to all cities and towns, as needed. This is the beginning of a long conversation and MRPC staff is looking forward to reporting on this matter in 2024 (and beyond, if necessary).

We are looking forward to our next discussion **in five weeks**.

K. Nartowicz stated Royalston would be interested in obtaining a few different services from MRPC and he will get back to us at a later date.

G. Tillotson asked if this pertained to any and all needs of a town or specifically in the building and planning area. G. Eaton responded that any and all with the exception of school districts and teaching.

K. Newman said she felt this service would be beneficial to many small towns with limited budgets. L Shifrin agreed and could relate.

G. Eaton confirmed that MRPC will survey all communities and we will provide the feedback at the next meeting.

5.3 Other Administrative Matters – Information

New Transportation Planner

Now that the Commissioners approved the Executive Director's request to promote Mr. Doherty from Senior Planner to Transportation Projects Director, we will need to advertise for a new employee to replace Mr. Doherty.

Management will, in accordance with the *MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook*, Section B. POLICIES APPLICABLE TO ALL MRPC REPRESENTATIVES, subsection 8. JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS, post the position internally and advertise externally, if necessary. Interviews would then be conducted by the Management. When a suitable candidate has been chosen a REPORT and RESOLUTION will be presented to the Commissioners for the hiring of a replacement planner. This would take place no earlier than February 8th and, hopefully, no later than April 4th, depending on the number of applications that MRPC receives and when and if they are submitted to this agency.

G. Tillotson asked if an interview committee would be required for this hire and Mr. Eaton explained no, we only did that to fill the Director's position. Expressed this is what we will need to do when the Executive Director retires.

8:45 PM

6. Department Updates

6.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

J. Stanton gave a brief tour and tutorial on how to use MRMapper and the new enhancements that have been added. You can now click on a community to view the open projects and the status of each project. Each project will also show contact information should you have any questions regarding the project.

This is still a work in progress, and we are continuing to correct any issues.

6.2 Planning & Development

K. Chapman stated the DLTA17 request for services will be sent out via email and snail mail on Monday. The first deadline is for the March Commission meeting.

This year MRPC is prioritizing MBTA communities and working on a Master Plan for one community.

6.3 Transit & Transportation

B. Doherty stated we are at the beginning process of updating the TIP which will cover FFY25 through FFY29. This process takes place over the next few months. We are currently getting information on project statuses. We will be reaching out to

communities and design consultants as well as MassDOT and we will discuss the status at the next MPO and JTC meetings in the coming months. We hope to have an endorsed product by May. If any communities have a project that is in the TIP program now is the time to reach out to your design consultant, make sure everything is going smoothly so we can continue on the placement of the project in a future fiscal year.

Our UPWP will follow the same calendar year. We hope to have an endorsed plan by May. This is in our work program for the Transportation Department through the MassDOT 3C contract.

8:50 PM 7. New Business

This time is reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

8:55 PM 8. Adjournment - The date of the next MRPC meeting – February 8, 2024, 7: 00p.m.

Having no objections, G. Corbosiero moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded.

L. Shifrin adjourned the meeting at 7:41 pm.

This meeting will be recorded by the GoToMeeting app and will be made available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontachusettRegion/videos>.

Meeting Attendance					
<u>Name</u>	<u>M/A</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Appointment Date</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Arpano, Abby	A	Ashburnham	12.2023	X	
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011		X
Leab, Doug	A	Ashby	7.2023		X
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001		X
Bialecki, Rebecca	A	Athol	7.2020.		X
Norton, Kathy	M	Athol	11.2023	X	
Copeland, Shaun	A	Ayer	7.2020.		X
Tillotson, Geoffrey	M	Ayer	7.2022	X	
Vacant	A	Clinton			X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X

Angus, Neil	N/V	DREZ	7.2023		X
Bohart, Mary Jo	A	Fitchburg	7.2021	X	
Butland, Alyne	M	Fitchburg	7.2020.		X
DeRoy, Jessica	A	Gardner	7.2021		X
Swartz, Robert	M	Gardner	7.2019		X
Cunningham, Peter	M	Groton	7.2022		X
Burke, Russell	A	Groton	7.2016		X
Minar, Kara	A	Harvard	7.2021		X
Donahue, Stacia	M	Harvard	7.2018	X	
Kresge, Mark	A	Hubbardston	7.2023		X
Munroe, Kristofer	M	Hubbardston	2.2023	X	
Dolan, Kelly	A	Lancaster	7.2023		X
Streeter, Frank	M	Lancaster	7.2023		X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Valliere, Dean	M	Leominster	7.2019	X	
Vacant	A	Lunenburg	7.2020.		X
Reid, Amanda	M	Lunenburg	7.2022	X	
Ermini, Annette	A	Petersham	7.2022		X
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Telepciak, John	M	Phillipston	10.2001		X
Jackson, Melanie	A	Phillipston	7.2022		X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	7.2017		X
Nartowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015	X	
Oelfke, Bill	A	Shirley	7.2020.		X

Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017		X
Newman, Kristen	A	Sterling	7.2023	X	
Page, Patty	M	Sterling	7.2019		X
Toth, Timothy	A	Templeton	7.2023		X
Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X
Sexton-Diranian, Charles	A	Townsend	7.2022		X
Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2019	X	
Vacant	A	Westminster			X
Buckman, Gregg	M	Westminster	7.2021		X
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019	X	
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	

Guests: R. Merrell - Ashburnham

Staff: G. Eaton, H. Ford, L. Quinlivan, K. Chapman, J. Stanton, B. Doherty

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT THE MEETING:

December 7, 2023 MRPC Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2024 MRPC Meeting Agenda

January 4, 2024 MRPC Meeting Detailed Agenda

Current Grant Opportunities Document

MRMapper Current Projects App.